

ALEXIAD

(ΑΛΞΙΑΣ)

\$2.00

Recently I have been trying to avoid buying products from China. I have not been totally successful. Some things I have not been able to do so because I have been unable to find products I need that were not made in China. I have found toothbrushes from Switzerland, razors from Greece, inkpens from Japan and South Korea, notebooks made here and India, notecards made here. I have not been able to find storage bags made outside of China. I have compromised there and also in not looking at thrift store labels too closely. I justify this because the money spent at thrift stores goes to charities, not China.

— Lisa

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The 145th Running of the Kentucky Derby was **May 4, 2019**. At first it looked like favorite Maximum Security had won, on a very sloppy track, but he was disqualified for interference, and Country House was declared the winner.
 The 144th Running of the Preakness Stakes was **May 18, 2019**. War of Will won, while both Country House and Maximum Security were absent, and Bodexpress threw his rider.
 The 150th Running of the Belmont Stakes was **June 8, 2019**. Sir Winston won and for a change there were no incidents.

The 94th Running of the Hambletonian (1st leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 3, 2019** at Meadowlands Racetrack in East Rutherford, New Jersey.
 The 65th Running of the Yonkers Trot (2nd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **August 31, 2019** at Yonkers Raceway in Yonkers, New York.
 The 126th Running of the Kentucky Futurity (3rd leg of the Trotting Triple Crown) is **October 6, 2019** at the Red Mile in Lexington, Kentucky.

July 20, 2019 is the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing.
 “The Eagle has landed.”
July 20, 2019 is the 75th anniversary of the attempt to assassinate Hitler.
 „Der Führer Adolf Hitler ist tot.”

Printed on June 29, 2019
 Deadline is **August 1, 2019**

Reviewer’s Notes

John Scalzi has kicked over an ant’s nest with his complaint about being accused of Hugo buying and the paradigm shift from fanzine fan writing to on-line fan writing. This seems to be all right, and anyone who complains is behind the times. So many of these “Best Fan Writers” are minor pros with blogs. Their followers vote them a “Best Fan Writer” Hugo, and voila, the author is a “Hugo Winning Author”.

It’s another symptom of the shift from participant to consumer. The readers of a blog are many to one. Add to that the Twitter Mob phenomenon and we have the fan wars of the forties reproduced in instant-time, with increased bitterness as none of the participants has the time to think over what they are saying, never mind considering what the other one is saying.

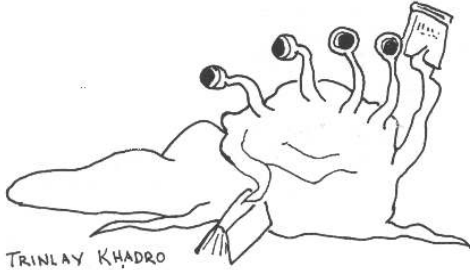
What’s the alternative? The FAAN Awards? Fewer and fewer people seem to be voting for them, and Corflu looks more and more like a group of people talking about the wonderful fanac they could produce and will any day now.

Maybe Milt Stevens had been right when he wanted to abolish the fan Hugos. They don’t mean what they originally meant. And that Wonderful Alternative, the Dragon Awards, doesn’t even have fan categories. Or so says a tired, sick old man.

— Joe

RANDOM JOTTINGS

by Joe



Buy my books. (All available on Amazon.com for quite reasonable prices, except the Hugo-nominated *Heinlein's Children*, which can be bought from NESFA for a reasonable price.)

— Advt.

The title of the first draft of *The Number of the Beast* (NHOL G.183) has changed. The book will now be titled *The Pursuit of the Pankera: A Parallel Novel about Parallel Universes*. There is still no release date. The publishers, Arc Manor / Phoenix Pick have announced there will be a Kickstarter to help fund the publication; contributors will be able to buy the book at a discount.

As for his editor, Dey Street Books announces that it is publishing *Frozen Hell*, the original draft of John W. Campbell's famous story "Who Goes There?" The story apparently had to be abridged for magazine publication (*Astounding Science Fiction*, August 1938, by "Don A. Stuart").

The manuscript was discovered by Hugo-nominated biographer Alec Nevala-Lee while doing research for his work. The book will feature an introduction by Robert Silverberg and a preface by Nevala-Lee.

Sam Adams, July 1925-June 2019

Mr. Sam served in the 2nd Marine Division in World War II. I came to know Mr. Sam at my church. He was a grand old man and my world is much poorer now that I can no longer listen to his stories. The Marines sent representatives to his funeral and I was glad to see his own honor him even as I grieved the hole left in my little world.

— Lisa

OBITS

We regret to report the death of **Gene Wolfe** on **April 14, 2019** at his home in Peoria. Born in New York City on **May 7, 1931**. At first in parallel with a career working on Pringles potato crisps, he began writing professionally, making his mark in 1970 with

"The Island of Doctor Death and Other Stories" (*Orbit 7*), a tale of the fourth wall falling down.

Along with other stories (including running changes on the title "The Island of Doctor Death") he struck gold with *The Book of the New Sun*, a series set in the days of the dying Earth, featuring a man who is intimately involved with people dying.

He won two Nebulas, being nominated for fourteen more along with eight Hugo nominations, and a number of other awards. His style was marked by among other things the ability to use obscure words properly, and in context that conveyed their meaning, instead of flinging them like a bayamo-speared jerid into the reader's argute, compulsory visage.

MONARCHICAL NEWS

We regret to report the death of **Jean, Grand Duke of Luxembourg** on April 23, 2019. Jean Benoît Guillaume Robert Antoine Louis Marie Adolphe Marc d'Aviano de Bourbon-Parma was born on **January 5, 1921** to Grand Duchess Charlotte of Luxembourg and Prince Felix de Bourbon-Parma. The then hereditary prince served in the Irish Guards during the war, succeeding his mother upon her abdication in 1964. He himself abdicated on 2000, passing the throne to his son **Henri**.

THE DEEP RANGE

Commentary by Joseph T Major on
THE FOUNTAINS OF PARADISE
by Sir Arthur C. Clarke
(1979)

Best Novel Hugo Award 1980
Best Novel Nebula Award 1979

Something was in the air. Or perhaps in space. This book was shortly followed by *The Web Between the Worlds* (1980) by Charles Sheffield. The time it takes to bring a submitted work to publication should indicate that this was not a case of plagiarism; Sam Moskowitz did not say anything (and he could talk, after a fashion, after his larynx had been removed).

But we do not begin with the science of the tower, or even in the time when its construction became possible. Rather, the story begins with the origins of the setting:

The crown grew heavier with each passing year. When the Venerable Bodhidharma Mahanayke Thero had — so reluctantly — first placed it upon his head, Prince Kalidasa was surprised by its lightness.

And in the beginning of this tale of political and familial conflict, a subtle joke resides. The Mahanayke Thero is a visitor from *The Deep Range* (1957), the first of some drop-ins from other works of Clarke's that will appear in this story. This cleric is not particularly interested in saving the whales ("Collect the set"), but is trying to maintain the power of religious entities

vis-a-vis secular ones. Kalidasa, on the other hand, is more interested in saving his own life, a prospect that is receding in parallel with the approach of a rebellious army.

The setting of this less-than-idyllic struggle is the island of Taprobane, one peculiarly similar to the island of Sri Lanka in our universe, but displaced somewhat. In fact, it straddles the equator, a location that is of some significance to the plot.

Kalidasa has a little problem with his claim to the throne; he was the firstborn son, but not the Queen's firstborn son. Also, his half-brother killed his favorite pet, an albino monkey which he adored. He took control, driving out the Queen and her son, locking up his father, and was crowned. Kalidasa's father showed some sense, anyhow, offering to show his ungrateful son his greatest treasure; the irrigation system.

Kalidasa built a palace on top of a mountain, decorating it with frescoes of beautiful women. His brother, on the other hand, spent his time getting foreign support, and invaded. Kalidasa lost the battle, died, was buried, and then his brother demolished the palace.

Today, various persons of importance in the world federation appreciate Kalidasa's art at a remove. Then Vannevar Morgan, the engineer who designed and directed the building of the Gibraltar Bridge, comes out with an even more innovative plan.

(One of the people who comments on the proposed space elevator is Charles Willis. This is a pseudonym of Clarke's. Just like two of the other pulp writers Horace Hackett meets in *Typewriter in the Sky* (*Unknown Fantasy Fiction*, November-December 1940, 1951) are pseudonyms of Hubbard's.)

One of the most influential events in recent history is the passage of the Starholmer probe Starglider through the Solar System. It learned human languages quickly, and as a going-away gift refused religion. As if that would make any impression. (The Starglider is a little more voluble than Rama (*Rendezvous with Rama* (1973), and less domineering than the Overlords (*Childhood's End* (1953)).)

This encourages the desire to go into space and handicaps religion. Which is advantageous to Morgan, since by a quirk of fate the best possible site for the Earth end of his space elevator is the site of the Buddhist monastery wherein the Mahanayke Theros have presided. The incumbent does not want to go with the program.

While negotiating with the Mahanayke Thero, Morgan encountered a legend; the yellow butterflies which migrate up the mountain but never quite reach its peak are known as "Kalidasa's Army". There is a legend that if Kalidasa's army ever reaches the peak, he will have conquered the monks.

There is a storm not quite adequately controlled by the planetary weather control system and a gale blows up the mountain. It happens to be butterfly migration time. Quite an amazing coincidence there.

After that the gritty engineering and financial details take hold. At one point, Morgan begins negotiating to build a space elevator on Mars, since there is already a convenient counterweight in orbit, Deimos. It would have to undergo an orbital shift, though, since its period is 30 hours 21 minutes, while the Martian sol is 24 hours 39.58 minutes. Except as inhabitants from John Carter to Mark Watney noticed, there is a little problem: Phobos [Thuria]. Its orbit is lower than Deimos's which just might cause some collision problems. Which turn out to be solvable, by making the elevator move back and forth as the hurtling moon of Barsoom passes. (At least they don't set it alight, as in *The Sands of Mars* (1951).)

This finally gets matters moving on Jasoom, er Earth. The story shifts ahead a few years, to where an actual connection has been made, though it is merely the initial cable of the elevator. In the interim, Morgan has had to take some steps to deal with heart trouble. Medical technology has developed an implantable heart monitor that warns the wearer out loud of any particular stress and proffers advice.

There is an emergency on the elevator. A scientific research team has had its station suffer an explosion, and they are in need of oxygen. The only feasible way to reach them before they run out is to go *up* the cables (actually flat strips). And the supply vehicle has to be crewed in order to have someone dock.

In spite of his health and age, Morgan volunteers. He is the lightest man around with the technical knowledge needed to make the connections. So off he goes.

There is a problem. It seems that the climber needs an extra battery to have enough power to carry the weight. The battery will have to be dropped once it is discharged. However, in the rush to get the rescue going, a technician forgot to remove a strap holding the battery in place during the setup. Morgan has to cut the bolt that the strap is attached to, at a great cost to his condition.

But in spite of everything, including running short of power and having to creep the last few meters (not to mention having the construction bringing the shelter down to him) Morgan reaches the shelter and provides oxygen to the researchers, whose leader is blithely continuing to do a study with the only instrument he could save. (They refer to their work as "Expedition to Earth", which by a fourth-wall coincidence happens to be the title of a collection of stories by Clarke (1953).)

Having saved the scientists, Morgan returns to Earth. However, he has overstrained himself, and in painful progression his monitor calls for rest, then for help. In vain.

In the final scene, set many years later, the Starholmers have followed their probe to Earth. Which is abandoned, frozen by a new ice age. Humans have, though, continued to advance, and have settled other planets all the

more, not to mention living in the vast ring around the Earth, supported by several towers similar to the first. (Morgan had thought of that, but he did not live to tell anyone else. It looks like someone else had the same idea.) Even though the ice age is similar, the result is better than the doom of humanity in "History Lesson" (*Startling Stories*, May 1949).

The Starholmers are swarm intelligences, reminiscent of the Swarm in "The Possessed" (*Dynamic Science Fiction*, March 1953). As for the ice age, remember that that was the established belief then. The science was settled.

In *An Informal History of the Hugos: A Personal Look Back at the Hugo Awards, 1953-2000* (2018; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 17 #6) Jo Walton says, "I don't think it's a good Hugo winner." Her accompanying book essay, usually about the year's Hugo winner, is instead about Thomas Disch's *On Wings of Song*.

LO, THE FORMER EGYPTIAN
 Commentary by Joseph T Major on
MURDER IN LITTLE EGYPT:
The True Story of a Father's Ultimate Betrayal
 by Darcy O'Brien
 (1989)

The most famous incident in McLeansboro history, according to an evaluation made by my father, was "th' hangin'." A farmer named Fred Behme got into an argument with his wife about religion. I have no information about the exact nature of the argument, though it could easily have been about the amount of water that should be used in a baptism. The Piopolis farmer disagreed with his wife so violently that he settled matters by knocking her on the head with a chunk of wood; then he took their youngest child out to the barn and lynched him between two mules. Never argue about religion.

Fred Behme was hanged amid great ceremony on the courthouse lawn in McLeansboro, and it has been said that every living person in Hamilton County, plus many from beyond its borders, attended the execution . . .
 — H. Allen Smith, *Lo, the Former Egyptian!*

Kevin Dale Cavaness died of cancer on January 29, 2013 in Honey Creek, Missouri. He was survived by his wife, mother (who has since passed away), a brother and two grandchildren.

What happened to his other brothers, and his father, is a different, and horrific matter.

Harry Allen Wolfgang Smith, better known as H. Allen Smith, was born in McLeansboro, Indiana. After a rise to fame as a columnist for the *New York World* and an observer of the strange and unusual of the world, he wrote about a trip he had taken home: *Lo, the Former Egyptian!* (1947). Smith was a humorist, and so did not want to write about the grim affairs of

neighboring Williamson County.

In the 1920's, Williamson County had 1) a coal mine strike which ended with the union workers massacring the replacement workers; 2) a Ku Klux Klan conflict which ended with the leader of the Klan and of the anti-Klan faction killing each other; and 3) a bootlegger gang war between the Shelton Brothers Gang and the Birger Gang which ended with the Sheltons fleeing to St. Louis and Charlie Birger, the other gang leader, being hanged. Then there came the Depression, then there came the 1937 Ohio Flood, which didn't do much for the coal mines.

On October 25, 1925, Noma and Peck Cavaness of Williamson County welcomed into the world a son, John Dale Cavaness. Peck was a brakeman on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, and therefore had a steady income. But as Dale grew up he noticed that there were people with even steadier incomes.



Dale Cavaness was a self-driven boy and man; he set himself goals and worked towards them with all his effort. He excelled in high school, not only academically but in sports. He served in the Navy during World War II and parlayed his GI benefits into first a bachelor's degree (at 22; unaffected by his naval service) and then a Doctor of Medicine degree.

Dr. Cavaness returned to Little Egypt, where he set up a medical practice in McLeansboro(!). He quickly became known for good relations with patients, refusing to bill the poor, going to the limit on medical claims, and so on.

Beyond that, he continued to push himself, working in the middlebrow method that became popular after WWII. He set up a study group to read Mortimer Adler's Great Books. He built a vast music collection and a top-rate music system.

When the money came in, he diversified. He raised cattle and catfish. He promoted a plan for the industrialization of Little Egypt, which he began to refer to as the "New Ruhr".

There was a darkness behind his self-improvement plans. He abused his medical staff, particularly his long-suffering accountant, who had to track Cavaness's spending habits.

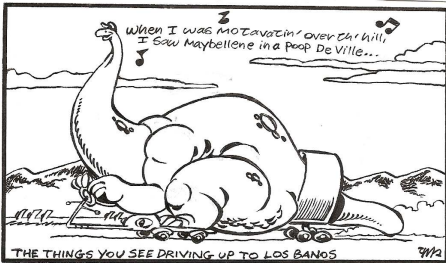
He was even more abusive towards his family. He had been married to the daughter of a fellow physician, with the intent of building a practice together, but the marriage broke up. He remarried, to Marian, a Pan Am flight attendant and nurse; they had four sons, Mark,

Kevin, Sean, and Patrick. This marriage also broke down, but Marian stayed with him for the sake of the children.

Cavaness was having anger management issues. In a short period of time, apparently, he demolished a pickup truck trying to push it out of a mudhole with a bulldozer, and shot a bull for balking at entering a trailer.

It would not be surprising to learn that Cavaness was a heavy drinker. Kevin recounted how his father had once been so drunk that he asked his son to drive him home. At 60 mph, over back Illinois roads, and Kevin was not quite twelve. It was a wonder that there wasn't an accident.

But there was, not just then. On April 8, 1971, Cavaness crossed the median and ran head-on into a truck with a family out on a drive. The husband and daughter died there; the wife was in a coma for some time. In a telling moment, one of the first things Cavaness said to the police was, "I have plenty of insurance."



After some legal maneuvering, Cavaness pleaded guilty — and got two years probation and a \$1000 fine. For two charges of vehicular homicide, and drunk driving.

By then Cavaness was in financial straits. His income from his medical practice was \$200,000 a year. His losses from his investments were — \$200,000 a year.

His family relationships continued to disintegrate. Marion and their youngest son, Patrick, had moved away, but Mark, the oldest son, was working odd jobs, including on his father's farm.

On April 9, 1977, Mark didn't come home. He was soon found — what was left of him. Apparently, he had been killed when he had managed to accidentally shoot himself with a shotgun.

Forensic profiler John Douglas, his partner Robert Ressler, and fellow profilers Ann and Allen Burgess brought out a book for policemen titled *Crime Classification Manual* (2006). In it, they classify the Mark Cavaness murder scene as an example of a staged scene. Seemingly, there was a hole in the case of the shotgun, and a camouflage vest which was trapped in the other door had the clothes hanger hook in the trigger guard of the shotgun through the hole, so when Mark pulled on the case, the gun fired. Except, the ejected shell was not in the case, but on the floorboard of the truck.

Anywhere else that would have been suspicious, but here it was good old Doc Cavaness's good-for-nothing son being careless. Fortunately, Doc had a \$40,000 life insurance policy on Mark. Remember, he had plenty of insurance.

By 1980, things were coming apart. Those good relations with patients had expanded to medical fraud, and in that year Cavaness had to plead guilty to legal charges.

Cavaness was physically deteriorating. To deal with being drunk, he would begin a work day with B-12 shots and inhaling oxygen. He was developing serious carpal tunnel syndrome, making his hands almost useless. He became unkempt and overaged-looking.

To help out with his taxes, Cavaness offered his sons Kevin and Sean a deal where he would pay for insurance on them; \$100,000 for each. Sean was becoming a drug abuser and it seems hard to understand how he got the coverage. Now they had plenty of insurance.

Soon, it didn't matter. On December 15, 1984, Sean was found dead in a remote and dioxin-poisoned area of St. Louis. He had been shot in the head, twice.

The St. Louis police questioned his father, who denied he had been there the day before. But they placed him in St. Louis, because his licence plate number had been recorded by some people. (One wonders about this. Are there people who make a habit of writing down licence plate numbers of people they don't recognize?)

Faced with this, Cavaness changed his story. They had talked, Sean had drunk, and then wanted to go out in the country to look around. When looking, he had abruptly shot himself in the back of the head.

Cavaness didn't want it to look like suicide, he said. So he picked up the gun and shot Sean in the head again, so it would look like a murder. How thoughtful of him.

In spite of this obvious explanation, Cavaness was arrested for murder. He had to have a fund-raiser to pay his lawyer, but people were enthusiastically willing to help. The first trial was a mistrial because of a prosecution error; the prosecutors had included a polygraph report in some evidence, and polygraphs are inadmissible in court.

The second trial was a little more complicated, as they had to go to Kansas City to get a jury which hadn't been barraged by coverage of the trial. In spite of the advantage to the defense of knowing the prosecution's case, Cavaness still lost. It didn't help that he insisted on taking the stand, using his medical knowledge, and being shown up. (Also, it seemed that his treatments and such were having to be reconsidered.)

Cavaness was sentenced to death in January of 1986. He committed suicide on November 17, 1986 — the day after a clause in his insurance that forbade payment for death by suicide had expired. He had plenty of insurance.

"When a doctor does go wrong, he is the

first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge," Sherlock Holmes says in "The Speckled Band". Dr. Grimesby Roylott, the target of this comment, did not have the assistance of a trusting community.

But Dr. Cavaness's knowledge seemed to have its limits. He chose to raise unsuitable cattle breeds. When he built a catfish farm, he made no arrangements to sell the fish ("If you build it they will come."). For a man who was concerned about making a go of financial affairs, he seems to have had no follow-through for his ideas.

The murder of Sean might have been passed by if it had been near McLeansboro. As it was, Cavaness was out of his support zone, and the police could get him. (Apparently he had also tried to kill Kevin and his wife Charli, or someone had, by filling their trailer with propane gas.)

The thought of a parent killing a child, or a doctor killing anyone, seems like a violation of the natural order of things. For there to be both is even more unthinkable, unbearable.

(O'Brien cites Cavaness's habit of calling together his friends by saying, "Hey, Rudie!" He is not quite sure what a "Rudie" is. Cavaness may have overheard air operations where pilots called for help with the carny cry of "Hey, Rubel!", and heard it wrong.)

YOU'RE SO VAIN by Joe

There will be a solar eclipse on **July 2**, visible on Oeno Island of Pitcairn Islands, in Coquimbo Region and Atacama Region of Chile and San Juan, La Rioja, San Luis, Córdoba, Santa Fe, and Buenos Aires provinces of Argentina. The longest totality will be 4 minutes 33 seconds, at sea at 17° 24' S, 109° W. The eclipse is part of Saros 127, which began on October 10, 991 and will end on March 21, 2452.

The next solar eclipse will be **December 26**, an annular eclipse visible in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Oman, the Indian states of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, the Northern, North Central, and Eastern Provinces of Sri Lanka, West Sumatra, Riau, West Kalimantan, North Kalimantan, and East Kalimantan in Indonesia, Sarawak in Malaysia, Singapore, Davao Occidental in the Philippines, Guam, and Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands. The maximum eclipse will be 3 minutes 40 seconds at 1° N 102° 18' E in Riau Province, Indonesia. The eclipse is part of Saros 132, which began August 13, 1208 and will end September 25, 2470.

NASA Eclipse website:
<https://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/eclipse.html>

Other useful eclipse websites:

<http://www.hermit.org/Eclipse>

<http://www.eclipse.org.uk/>

PARATIMERS

Review by Joseph T Major of
THE TRANSTEMPORAL MAN

by John F. Carr

(2019; Amazon Digital Services; \$5.99)

Based on characters and situations created
by H. Beam Piper

Carr has been writing about the Paratime Police, with varying degrees of quality, over the past few years. His own publishing house, Pequod Press, brought out some anthologies of Paratime stories by Piper and by Carr. When Carr wanted to publish them on Amazon, they declined, noting the presence of public-domain material. Thus this, which contains stories by Carr (and others) with no public-domain material.

The first story is an in-universe essay, so to speak, titled “**On Paratime**”, with an explanation of how the Paratimers see the system themselves, as told by one of them. It does help the reader get into the universe.

The second story is more of an essay, by another Piper fan, simply if confusingly titled “**Paratime**”. It describes how the series came to be, which will interest more the reader who becomes devoted and wants to know the background.

The third story is an actual Paratime story, “**Paratime Parasites**”. It features Verkan Vall in between his marriages. He is being sent into the far-out Fifth Level, the one where there are no civilizations and almost no sentiments, to find a missing Paratime conveyor before someone else does. The discovery involves some very hazardous encounters, and has a surprising twist at the end.

The fourth story, “**Back from the Dead**”, is a revised version of the third part of Carr’s extension of Piper’s story “Time Crime”, which was published as, big surprise, *Time Crime* (2010; reviewed in *Alexiad* V. 10 #1). As such, it’s a look at the seamy underside of the Paratime Home Timeline.

The fifth story, “**Paratime Paradox**”, is a fourth-wall breaker in which Verkan Vall is sent to investigate a Fourth Level writer who is writing about something suspiciously similar to their reality. Yes, it’s H. Beam Piper and his Paratime series. Not a good idea.

The sixth story, “**The Transtemporal Man**” is a heartbreaking story of a man who is repeatedly cursed. Somehow, spontaneously, randomly, he is transported from timeline to timeline, having to rebuild his life on a regular basis. Since they can’t associate his travels with any of their efforts, the Paratime Police have to investigate. It’s a sad and tragic story with a very bitter ending.

Carr brought out this anthology because, he says, Amazon Digital Services cracked down on works that combined public-domain writings (i.e., Piper’s works) with original

works (i.e., his own). It might be interesting to read a work by Carr about ordinary work in the Paratime Police or the Home Time Line featuring someone other than Verkan Vall. Just some curious notions I have.

LAYTHE RULES

Review by Joseph T Major of
**SWORDS AGAINST THE MOON MEN:
The Wild Adventures of Edgar Rice
Burroughs Series #6**

by Christopher Paul Carey
(2018; Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.;
ISBN 978-1945462122; \$34.95;
Amazon Digital Services; \$5.95)

Based on characters and situations created by
Edgar Rice Burroughs

Edgar Rice Burroughs created a vast universe. A number of his followers didn’t quite get this. For example, going forward in time from Tarzan’s adventures in Africa won’t go well.

In 1919, Burroughs decided to do something serious. He wrote a gripping, terrifying story of the United States under Bolshevik rule. Julian James is a resident of Communist America, in the ruins of the bourgeois city of Chicago, tyrannized by commissar Otto Bergst. When the oppression gets too harsh to endure, Julian fomented rebellion against the Communists.

It didn’t sell. Nobody thought it could happen here and by the way, Ed, how about another Tarzan novel?

Looking back, we can see depicted the arbitrary rule of Communism, the destruction of industry and agriculture, the evaporation even of money. It is as if some time-traveler gave Burroughs copies of *The Great Terror* (1968), *Nomenklatura* (1984), *The Harvest of Sorrow* (1986), and *Hungry Ghosts* (1996).

And so it sat.

In 1922 Burroughs decided there was no point in wasting a good story. And so *The Moon Men* emerged, with the Communists becoming evil moon men. (To make his point, the government units are called “Teivos”; “Soviet” spelled backwards.)

Then he provided a prequel, explaining how the Communists — that is, the Kalkars — came to Earth. The first lunar expedition had a little problem; Orthis, the ship’s designer and engineer, suffered from a severe case of No. 2 syndrome, having graduated second from the naval academy and always been behind the first-place grad, Julian 5th, now his commanding officer. Who stopped him from drinking, so in retaliation he sabotaged the ship and it landed on the Moon, instead of its destination, Barsoom.

This is where the connections begin, since the expedition to Barsoom would receive a grateful welcome. The locals knew they were coming, thanks to the Gridley Wave transmissions. See *A Fighting Man of Mars* (1930) and *Tanar of Pellucidar* (1929) for where this comes in.

After an encounter with the local monarchy,

which is overthrown by their Bolsheviks, the captain Julian 5th and his girlfriend, the heiress Nah-ee-lah, manage to rejoin the ship, which has been repaired, and go to Earth.

The whole thing was told to a narrator by Air Admiral Julian 3rd, talking about his descendants Julian 5th and Julian 9th — a reversed reincarnation.

The Moon Men begins with the narrator encountering Air Admiral Julian 3rd. He went hunting and things didn’t go at all well. The admiral makes small talk about another of his future lives, beginning with him remembering his death. The former No. 2 of Julian 5th, Orthis, has joined with the Kalkars and built an interplanetary fleet armed with a disintegrating ray. The Earth fleet has been run down, and the Kalkars are taking over. Julian 5th emerges with the last remnants of the fleet, and in a decisive battle achieves Mutual Assured Destruction with Orthis. The Kalkars take over. So if Tarzan steps into the time machine of *Time’s Last Gift* (1972) and goes to the future, it’s not going to be very nice there. Sorry, PJF.

But Orthis was the only man who could build the space drive. When the Kalkars lose a ship, they can’t replace it. Imagine Orthis as Sergei P. Korolev, the Chief Designer and Builder of the *Integral*. (The dramatic battle scene where Robert Goddard confronts Korolev on board their respective spaceships would be very interesting to read.)

The story goes on, being *Under the Red Flag* with all the names changed. Adding to the shock, it ends with Julian 3rd remembering the execution of Julian 9th. This can’t be the most pleasant thing to remember.

Figuring that if they can’t beat them, they might as well join them, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., has issued a set of sequels and further adventures of the original characters. Trademarks included, so no more adventures of Elmo of the Apes (“Tarzan” was trademarked).

This story fills in the gap between *The Moon Maid* and *The Moon Men*. Air Admiral Julian 3rd has another encounter with the narrator, and tells of his effort to remember his future lives. As with this one, the story of Julian 7th, Brother Julian under the Kalkars.

The transport infrastructure of the conquered Earth is deteriorating. Ask P. J. O’Rourke about that (“Ship of Fools” (*Harper’s Magazine*, July, 1982)). And Julian 7th of Chicago has a traumatic experience when young; the Kalkar Kash Guard finally come for Nah-ee-lah, the Jemadav of Laythe, widow of Julian 5th and hence his own grandmother. She gives herself up, sneering in contempt at them.

Julian 7th grows up hating the Kalkars, being dominated by them. Then by a fortuitous event, he manages to infiltrate the local command, where he finds the last working Gridley Wave apparatus on Earth. There is an urgent message from Barsoom.

Stealing one of the last few working space-

ships, Julian 7th makes a perilous voyage. And discovers something heartening, if annoying; Laythe wasn't the only country on the Moon, and most of them *haven't* been conquered by the Kalkars. Not for lack of trying.

On the Moon, Julian 7th gets thrown into the usual intrigue, conspiracy, undercover work, and crisis, aided by a most unusual assistant. You will recall that the Barsoomian expedition to Jasoom at about the same time as Julian 5th's expedition got into trouble and became a space station. Nevertheless, they persisted, and now a Barsoomian eighth-ray ship has made it to the hurtling moon of Jasoom.

The commander is a take-charge man who thinks that affairs at his new home are stable enough that he can get a closer look at his old one. Yes, John Carter himself.

After settling the affairs of the Kalkar attempt to reduce the surviving lunar countries, Carter returns to Barsoom. Julian 7th has repeated the path of his grandfather, falling in love with a lunar princess.

But then he finds her dead. And to keep from being bothered by Terrans and Kalkars, the local Jemadar orders that Julian 7th have a mind-wipe and be packed off home again.

Only, it turns out neither his perception nor their plans quite go that way . . .

This book seems more aimed at the ERB fan who desperately wants more — a subset of a subset. It follows the established nature of the stories, down to the discovery of a new enclave on the Moon (the way that Tarzan kept on running into opposing pairs of lost cities in Africa). It is at least decently written.

SOLDIER IN THE DOWNFALL

Review by Joseph T Major of

OPERATION FLASH:

Episode 1: Knight's Gambit Accepted

by Nitay Arbel

(2019; One Music as Before Press;
Amazon Digital Services; \$0.99)

As Oberst Rudolf-Christoph Freiherr von Gersdorff stared into the toilet, he must have felt that his spectacular suicide attempt had been in vain. All because Hitler had inexplicably *run* through the exhibit of captured Soviet weaponry at the Zeughaus in Berlin. This time the British fuzes had worked, unlike the last time when the bomb in Hitler's plane had failed to go off. However, this one went off in the *Klo*.

Gersdorff lived until 1980, like his fellow anti-Hitler conspirators dismissed as "just another Nazi". (His observations on for example Borissov as recorded in his memoirs *Soldier in the Downfall* (2012) ought to, but in those minds probably won't, refute that.)

But what if Gersdorff had managed to Take That Man With Him? Or rather, the fictional character Arbel creates to replace Gersdorff, with a name that honors both him and another assassin from that period.

Our point of view character for this section is a young officer attached to the Abwehr, who recounts the travails of spywork and the painful realities around him. Witnessing the blast, he is thrown into the heart of the conspiracy, watching the events unfold as leaders declare for one side or the other. (Martin Bormann becomes the leader of the pro-Nazi faction. Where did I hear that before? Oh, I had that in my own novel. Advt.)

He even foils a commando strike by that chronic hero of alternate history, Otto Skorzeny. Would it have worked if Belisarius, that other chronic hero of alternate history, had been involved?

Then we shift across the Channel, to a personal secretary for Churchill, who had an unusual background. Her mother, abruptly widowed, fled the Reich for England, where she managed to remarry and bring up her children as good Englishpersons. The Prime Minister is portrayed as juggling his determination to defeat Germany with the realization that the Naaazees are on the ropes.

And so we come to a pause. Whatever will the Great Leader and Teacher, the Great Stalin (five minutes of unrestrained applause) have to say about this? And what of That Man In the White House? Will he hearken to those who see no difference? Never mind the other players, such as *le Grande Charles*.

At the time, the Eastern Front is in mixed states; von Manstein has blunted the Soviet offensive at Kharkov, but the Red Army of Workers and Peasants is waxing in strength and expertise. In Africa, von Arnim has regrouped after Kasserine, but their time in Africa is limited.

Arbel displays the horrors of the Nazi regime in various fields, and so many of the people involved have been tainted by it. What is to be done? We shall see this and other matters when this tale is . . . **[To Be Continued]**

ZERSTÖRERMÄNNER BAND VI

Review by Joseph T Major of

KAISERKRIEGER 6: DER KAISER

(The Emperor's Men 6: Emperor)

by Dirk van den Boom

(2019; Atlantis Verlag Guido Latz;
Amazon Digital Services; \$4.99)
<http://www.atlantis-verlag.de>

Magister Militum Rheinsberg ought to be glad that he isn't facing yet another set of opponents who heretofore just hadn't wanted to get involved. The current lot are bad enough. He has had to flee to Africa with most of his men and Theodosius Augustus, but Maximus Augustus and his defecting German Frhr. von Klasewitz are reconstructing and progressing under pressure.

Other peripheral issues continue. Rheinsberg's lover is pregnant. The mission to Axum has returned and at least they will have valuable *Kaffee* (unlike heedless Americans, who would have sent a ship across the Atlantic to get tobacco). The ensign who had been abruptly

drafted into the Roman Army has re-emerged. Ambrosius, Bishop of Milan, is struggling with the proper thing to do for the Faith. And SMS *Saarbrücken* is wearing out.

This is Rome! There's intrigue, treason, betrayal, dissent, and health problems. All of which weigh heavily on Rheinsberg, kicked upstairs from command of one of his Imperial Majesty's cruisers, and running short of his advantages. (And yes, the steamships he built there had engines entirely of bronze.)

Maximus and Klasewitz cross the sea to face Theodosius in their own version of Second Bedriacum. The clash will involve many levels of technology, and the result will be . . . surprising.

But it looks as if their problems are not yet done for this story is . . . **[Fortsetzung folgt]**.

TRIPLE CROWN NEWS

by Lisa

Derby Day

Joe and I do our usual morning rounds. I find something equine to wear, not a horse but a unicorn with cats bouncing around it.

Derby time comes. Maximum Security comes blazing out and has things well in hand. Trouble comes in the stretch. Other jockeys claim foul. As the minutes drag by without an official result I realize this is serious. The Derby result is actually in question. I start getting ready to go eat and about the time I finish I hear a roar come up from the crowd and know the stewards have made their decision. At first I do not believe what my ears tell me. I do not believe until Joe confirms that the stewards have indeed disqualified Maximum Security and made longshot Country House the official winner. It is only the second time in history that the horse first across the line in the Derby has been disqualified, the first being Dancer's Image back in 1968. Immediately the debate starts and racing fans polarize into pro Maximum Security and pro Country House. I will declare now that I am on the Country House side. The Derby, with its crowded field, is no place for dangerous behavior by either horse or jockey. It is an accident waiting to happen. Every year I pray that all horses and jockeys come back safely. In any case, the decision of the stewards is the decision. The connections of Dancer's Image tried hard to get the decision overturned and failed. Forward Pass remained the official winner of the 1968 Derby. I do not expect that Maximum Security's owner will have any better luck. The stewards reviewed the video for more than twenty minutes. They knew the controversy their decision would bring. I do not believe they made their decision without much discussion and thought. I am also sure this one will be debated for years.

Maximum Security's owner promptly declares his colt will not race in the Preakness or Belmont and then also challenges both War of Will and Country House to match races. I do not understand why he would do this after

taking his colt out of Triple Crown competition where he has a golden chance to let his colt prove himself. Country House develops a cough and is out of the other Triple Crown races but there will be War of Will in Preakness and Belmont.

Preakness

The start is nasty. Bodexpress is caught rearing and dumps his rider on the dirt outside the starting gate. He heads down the track riderless, a danger to himself and all the other horses. Fortunately he prefers to gallop well clear of the others. An outrider makes an attempt to catch him but the colt ducks too close to the others for the outrider to safely continue the attempt. Meanwhile on the front end War of Will, the colt interfered with in the Derby, takes command of the race and gets across the line first. And since there was no question of his having caused the Bodexpress incident (he was at the other end of the gate) nobody challenges his win. I let out a deep breath and began to wonder what is going to happen in the Belmont. Two of the three Triple Crown races have had incidents.

Belmont

War of Will came up flat and fresh Sir Winston, named after Winston Churchill, made off with the race. I had hoped that War of Will would take the race but he had been through all three Triple Crown races. It takes an extraordinary colt to take all three races and it turned out that War of Will was only very good. A win in the Preakness is nothing to be ashamed of, though.

A MOUSE IN THE HOUSE

by Lisa

One day when Joe comes to my library he tells me a mouse got into the trash can and apparently could not get out. I visit a local thrift store and buy a box with bars that will allow the little pest to breathe. Back home I put on gloves and maneuver the mouse. It tries to jump out of the trash can but does not quite make it. It takes several tries but I finally get it caged. That done I take it outside and head for a deserted area near the house. It is an athletic little critter which jumps up to the bars, turns itself upside down and makes frantic attempts to squeeze through the bars. I find myself laughing at its terrified antics, even as I know it is cruel to do so. I get to the deserted area and open the cage. The mouse does not hesitate. It jumps and runs from the horrible monster who had captured it.

Unfortunately this is not the end of the mouse problem. Another mouse gets into the trash can trap. I sigh to myself, get out the mousetrap box and gloves. This one is easier to corral and not as athletic as the previous one. It mostly sits in the cage and grooms itself while shaking in terror. It does not jump out when I open the box. I have to turn the box over before it gets the message that I want

it gone.

It has taken the mice about a year to realize that the little lions and tigers are gone. I consider getting another cat for a couple of minutes but conclude that I do not want to be tied down. Acquiring a new cat would mean vet bills and having to board the cat if we wanted to go somewhere. I have no responsibility toward the mice. They're lucky I'm enough of a sucker that I find it impossible to look in their eyes and take their little lives, which is what I would do if I had any sense.

A GOOD FIRST NOVEL

Review by Sue Burke of
OUT OF THE SILENT PLANET

by C. S. Lewis
(1965 edition; Macmillan;
ISBN 00202086910X;
Kindle \$5.99; paperback, used, from \$5.24)

C. S. Lewis wrote this novel in 1938 after a conversation with J.R.R. Tolkien. They lamented how little fiction was available to their liking, and Lewis agreed to write a space-travel story. He'd written little fiction so far, but as he says in a note preceding the story, he'd enjoyed H.G. Wells's "fantasies" and owed them a debt.

The resulting novel, more science fantasy than science fiction, contains many pages of imaginative worldbuilding and thoughtful philosophizing. At times, though, the plot slows and thins, as does characterization. Unlike *The Screwtape Letters*, which I enjoyed and recommend, it offers little humor or stylish writing.

Readers making their first forays into science fiction and fantasy might enjoy more recent books better – the writing here is a little too dated and unsophisticated. However, readers who are trying to grasp the history of science fiction should read this as a milestone in the development of the genre and of Lewis's career. In addition, patient readers might enjoy the intriguing questions it raises about spirituality and ethics.

Although it's part of a trilogy, this novel reaches a satisfactory stand-alone ending. When our protagonist, having wandered the solar system, finally returns to Earth, his first act is to find a bar and order a pint of bitter.

WHAT HE DIDN'T SEE

Review by Sue Burke of
THE BEST OF POUL ANDERSON

by Poul Anderson
(1976; Pocket Books, a division of Simon & Schuster; ISBN 0671831402;
used paperback from \$1.99)

Poul Anderson (1926–2001) won multiple awards and much acclaim during his career. His story "Eutopia" in the *Dangerous Vision* anthology (1967) remains one of my favorites for the way the plot hinges on the final word. This is typical of Anderson. His plots were genius.

Likewise, all nine of the stories in this collection are impeccably told – and yet this book left me troubled. A quick summary of the

stories might offer a clue about why.

"The Longest Voyage" (1960): Explorers (men) rather like 1700s sailors on Earth are circumnavigating their planet, and they find a high-tech artifact. Won the 1961 Hugo Award for short story.

"The Barbarian" (1956): A spoof of Conan the Barbarian.

"The Last of the Deliverers" (1958): A man arrives in a future Ohio town and debates politics in a satire of the Cold War.

"My Object All Sublime" (1961): A couple of men meet over time travel and crime – to say more would be a spoiler, and there's a nice twist.

"Sam Hall" (1953): A man fights an oppressive government. Nominated for a Prometheus Award and Retro Hugo Award.

"Kyrie" (1968): A woman falls in love with a doomed alien. Nominated for a Nebula Award.

"The Fatal Fulfillment" (1970): A man falls afoul of a repressive system of psychological control.

"Hiding Place" (1961): A space opera story involving Nicholas Van Rijn, one of Anderson's recurring characters.

"The Sky People" (1959): In the future on a resource-depleted Earth, a savage attack falls on a peaceful city, and a brave captain (male) saves it.

You may have noticed a certain dearth of women in significant roles. And consider the description of the only woman who is a protagonist: Her ship's captain regards her as "gauche" and "inhibited," and he tries to suppress his "distaste" – "but her looks! Scrawny, big-footed, big-nosed, pop eyes and stringy, dust-colored hair...."

When women are introduced in these stories, they often lead with their breasts and sex appeal: "her build left no doubt [of her mammalian life form]," "the rich black dress caressed a figure as good as any in the world," "blond, big-eyed, and thoroughly three-dimensional," "her gown was of shimmerite and shameless in cut," "young and comely, and you didn't often see that much exposed female flesh anymore," "a stunning blonde," "she was nice-looking ... and he thought he could get her into bed."

In "The Hiding Place," Nicholas Van Rijn has brought a female paid sex companion on his trip whom he keeps underclad and verbally and physically mistreats. In fairness, he's an ass to everyone, but her abuse has a rapey edge – and he's the hero of the story. In "The Sky People," the rescuing fleet has bare-chested woman aboard who "comfort" the men as their only means to join an exciting mission of discovery. Couldn't they be full members of the crew and share in the adventure without prostituting themselves?

I was born in 1955. I grew up in a time when girls could only wear skirts to school – among many other arbitrary, humiliating, harmful rules, such as no competitive sports; women could legally be paid less than men for

the same work if they could even get the same work; reproductive rights didn't exist. As a headstrong girl, I chafed at the restrictions, stereotypes, and peremptory limited horizons. Reading these stories is a return to the nightmare time when I was legally a second-class citizen.

Poul Anderson can't be held too much at fault for not seeing that, though. Second-wave feminism didn't begin in the United States until after most of these stories were published, and progress toward equality was (and still is) slow. Other authors of that time, in and out of science fiction, were equally blind to what we can easily see now.

My question is this: What are we blind to now? What in today's fiction will future readers point at and wonder how we could have missed something so utterly glaring?

We're all idiots, we just don't know what kind of idiot. Reading this book with its painful flaws ought to keep us humble.

A GRINCH IN TIME

Review by Taral Wayne of

THE GRINCH

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2709692/>

"You're a mean one . . ."

How *could* anyone mess up a lyric like that? And yet, someone found a way to do it. It was bad enough that Boris Karloff was dead, and someone else had step in to voice the Grinch ... but the pleasant tenor who replaced the grating, sepulchral voice I expected was even more disappointing. However, there was no excuse to perform the keynote song as a Rap number. It was an inexplicable mistake, made all the worse by pandering to an audience that probably wasn't there.

Having squeezed the last drop of spleen out my system for the time being, the recent, computer-animated version of *How The Grinch Stole Christmas* was a remarkably enjoyable film.

I do have to emphasize that Benedict Cumberbatch was not the voice actor I expected to play the Grinch. Although able to overcome a strong British accent for the role, he simply comes across as far too *nice* a guy for a Grinch. He is sarcastic, occasionally a little sadistic, but mostly seems like a friendly, cheerful sort of fellow who happens to be green, furry and lives on a mountain by himself. What sort of Grinch is *that*?

Yet it must be admitted that Cumberbatch is a voice actor of great skill and subtlety in his characterization. As a bonus, the new film version also stars Angela Lansbury, who plays the Whoville mayor. In general, it is an appealing film, with stunning visuals, and is mostly quite funny.

The difficult question that arises is why this latest version of *The Grinch* ever had to be made at all.

Perhaps the best answer is that it corrects one of the worst displays of cinematic rug-

chewing in history, one that put Jim Carrey in a green body suit, and prompted him to mug at the camera like a reprise of *The Mask*. There is a history behind *The Grinch*, and perhaps it is best to start there, with *The How The Grinch Stole Christmas*, the original children's book by Dr. Seuss.

There is no real comparison with the book written by Theodore Geisel, which is about a hermit who hates Christmas, and the good-hearted Whos who live in the village below his icy mountain. The Grinch is an evil creature, with sinister eyes and a snarl that makes young readers cringe. He lives with a browbeaten dog named Max – who is, frankly, a dogsbody. The art is eccentric, as is all of Dr. Seuss's work, and the story is carefully composed with a highly onomatopoeic text. In the years since 1957, when it was published, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* has probably been read by millions of children all over the world, rivaling the Bible and the Quran for readership ... and few other books.

In 1966, the story was made into an animated television special by the legendary director, Chuck Jones. Equally legendary was the narration of the story by Boris Karloff, whose ominous voice chilled viewers both young and old, as he read the words just as they were written in the book. Three original songs were written: "Trim Up the Tree" and "Welcome Christmas" were preformed by the uncredited "Whos." But the third song, "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch" was widely thought to have been sung by Karloff himself. The actor later admitted that he could sing no better than a rusty coffin hinge. This difficulty sent the director looking for a stand-in, who he found in Thurl Ravenscroft, a veteran voice actor himself. By oversight, Ravenscroft was uncredited ... along with the Who chorus, and also June Foray, who played little Cindy Lou Who.

The Chuck Jones adaptation of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* was, if possible, even more of a success than the original book! Ironically, Jones and Seuss got along rather badly, with many artistic arguments over style. Jones was adaptable enough to capture the anarchic architectural style of Whoville, carefully copied the toys and musical instruments, designed appropriate costumes and filled the Who homes with Seussian furnishings. But Jones and Seuss just could not agree on how the *Grinch* should look!

In the book, the Grinch looks more or less like an avocado. He is a bilious green colour, pear-shaped, and has a ruff around his neck as though he had just been plucked from the bush. Over his head grows a noxious-looking weed that hangs in his yellow, slanted eyes. Lest there be any misunderstanding of the Grinch, he is mean-looking, with a flexible face capable of infinite expressions of disdain, dislike and disgust.

You might not think it possible, but the Grinch played by Jim Carrey actually surpasses his namesake in ugliness. The live-action version of the Grinch had a coat of straggly,

feather-like fur, a face that was as wrinkled as a prune, a nose screwed up between his eyes, a mouth split into an unpleasant hairlip and a topknot whose ugly roach suggested the need of a scalping knife. This is no-one you would care to have sitting opposite to you while tucking into your Roast Beast!

The genuine crime committed by Carrey, however, was inexcusable over-acting. A genuine Grinch should possess an innate dignity, a sense of his own propriety at all times ... save in those moments when he is consumed by rage and resentment. You could stuff Jim Carrey into a Grinch suit, but the actor couldn't get into the character. Carrey had none of the gravity of a being completely lacking a sense of humour. Instead, he played to a full house in his own mind, gesticulating wildly, mugging to the camera and making cheap asides to the audience.

Superficially, the Grinch seen in the computer-animated 2018 film is not much different from either the Seuss version, or Jim Carrey's. All his main features are where they belong, but everything about the new Grinch is softened, more appealing, and allowed a wider range of expression. But doesn't it undermine the essential "Grinchiness" of the character to make him so much more likeable? To be sure, he pulls a few mean tricks that finally lead up to the *piece de resistance* by stealing Christmas, but – given his background – it almost seems understandable.

When all is said and done, the two movies have a great more in common than is good. To flesh-out a 25-minute television special into a 105-minute film in 2000, or an 86-minute animated film in 2018, is difficult enough. However, when very little can be altered from the original, the constraints may be stifling. Both feature films were forced to add a good deal of new material in order to expand the running time, and what could be more natural, in an audience, than wanting to know more about the Grinch?

We are shown both Grinches in their youth, and given an insight into the forces that turned them away from society ... *specifically* their rejection of Christmas. Their stories unfold in much the same way in how they interact with the Whos in the both the past and the present. The chief difference in the live-action film is that the back-story is far too long, largely irrelevant and reflects very badly on the Whos – whose shabby treatment of the Grinch gives him every reason to dislike them. In the more recent, animated film, his back-story is told far more economically, and without portraying the Whos as status-conscious materialists, but as the good people that Seuss meant them to be.

Both films obviously needed every expedient possible to pad the story beyond the original 23-minute cartoon. In the live-action film, the slack was taken up to an unconscionable extent by Jim Carrey's maundering soliloquies. In the 2018 version, we are thankfully spared all that. The slack is taken up by a dim-witted reindeer that the Grinch tries to impress into his

service along with his dogsbody, Max. Perhaps surprisingly, I had no problem with that. Although the new material is entirely unnecessary in the original story – or any semblance of a plot – it is harmless, and a *lot* funnier than Jim Carrey.

Reviews I've read about the latest version of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* have been mostly favorable. If there was a single objection I had about the new film, it was that it really had nothing new to offer the audience – other than a few new gags, and a new musical score. And I hasten to add that the Rap version of “You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch” was the perfect poison to kill that original, wonderful song for a lifetime. Apart from Danny Elfman's musical lapse, however, I had no serious complaints about the film, and certainly plan to see it again sometime soon. No later than next Christmas, for certain. There are other films that you might give a higher priority to than *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, but sometimes it's good just to watch a film for fun.

I wonder if there are any Grinch toys that would look good on my desk?

* * * * *

So they went off together. But wherever they go, and whatever happens to them on the way, in that enchanted place on the top of the Forest a little boy and his Bear will always be playing.

Alas, it was not true. In time, the little boy grew up and went to school, became a man, and finally went to war. But worst of all ... *he forgot*.

In this return to the world of The Hundred Acre Wood, Pooh and his friends waited, and waited for Christopher Robin to return. One by one they stopped waiting, and went away by themselves, until only the faithful bear of little brain remained.

The grown-up Christopher Robin found work after the Second World War, designing luggage for a firm that wasn't doing well. His immediate boss was demanding, did little useful work himself because he was the head boss's son, and – worse – he stole the credit from his employees. Robin was under pressure to lay off much of his department, throwing men out of work just as the post-war depression in Britain deepened. Saddled with responsibility for his co-workers, his wife and young daughter, a Pooh bear was the last thing on his mind.

But if Robin would not return to the Hundred Acre Wood, Pooh finally decided to look for him in the outside world.

It is a charming film, and depiction of the Hundred Acre Wood, empty of joy and laughter, plays a perfect melancholy note in the film. Equally inventive is Pooh's venture into the world of post-WWII England. The discovery that Pooh is *very* real was a particularly delicate moment in the plot, but one that was handled perfectly. His reality is unquestionable, and not a mere figment of Christopher Robin's imagination at all ... and has real, if understated, consequences when his wife and daughter discover the truth.

There have been untold numbers of voice actors since the theatrical Pooh appeared on the big screen. As the first to speak for Pooh, Sterling Holloway became the benchmark for all Pooh Bears to come. The inimitable Holloway died in 1977, after a long career in show business, leaving a gaping hole in Disney's voice-talent pool. For the next two short films, the part of Winnie was filled by “Otis the Drunk” from the Andy Griffith Show ... otherwise known as Hal Smith! After 1987, the voice of Winnie the Pooh was played by Jim Cummings, who has held the job ever since, in full-length features and whatever else the Disney corporation – with a sharp eye for profitability – could squeeze a Bear of Very Little Brain into. It may surprise you to realize that Cummings is also the voice of Tigger!

It is one thing to voice Pooh in what were, after all, a series of films for children. *Christopher Robin* is *not* a children's film ... though it is a film with children. The dialog is sometimes quite surprising, for this is essentially an adult story. It is delightful that the voice actor was

entirely up to conveying both the essential innocence of the Pooh character, while also venturing into territory as diverse as loss, doubt, and rediscovery.

The “real” Pooh was a real bear, who was born in Northern Ontario. His owner was a member of Royal Canadian Army Veterinary Corp, who bought the bear from a trapper, and was on this way to Winnipeg before being shipped overseas. The bear came with him. There, he took up a new home in the London Zoo, where a certain Christopher Robin Milne named his Teddy “Winnie” after the orphaned cub. Today, the statue of the soldier and his bear are now world-famous, bearing their likeness proudly.

More interesting is the “real” Christopher Robin. Unlike his fictional counterpart, Christopher Robin, Christopher Milne grew up under the shadow of his famous father, who milked the child for inspiration, but left the boy with a reputation he had no desire to live up to. As a child, he had no other boys to grow up with, and then suddenly, when he has old enough to attend boarding school he was unwillingly packed off. Later, as a young man at university, he was mainly known for being the little boy who, in everyone's eyes, would *never* grow up! Notoriety eventually fostered resentment, and for a time Christopher Milne bitterly disliked being his father's model. This was all the more so because A.A. Milne was, in fact, a rather *distant* father figure, without the great natural sympathy you would expect for the father of a boy who inspired *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*.

Nor was the boy's mother at all close to Christopher. She lived all her life as though on an Edwardian pedestal. When A.A. Milne died a few years after the war, Christopher left Cotchford Farm – The Hundred Acre Wood as we know it – and his mother sold the farm, the furniture and their personal possessions. She rarely saw her son afterward and was not even willing to see him on her deathbed, preferring the company of her garden. Christopher Robin left the family home, and *never* returned.

In time, Christopher Milne apparently came to find peace with his father's memory, and in the very different life that he created for himself in later years. He and his wife operated a modest booksellers' shop in Dartmouth, where he was quite content to pursue his own interests, and not have to own any part of being “Christopher Robin.” Perhaps it was his desire for independence that led him to refuse any part of the royalties due to him from his father's estate, and inspired him to donate his famous playthings from The Hundred Acre Wood to the New York Public Library.

Christopher Robin Milne died at the age of 76, in 1996.

Less well known is that the real Christopher Robin also suffered from an uncommon affliction, known as Myasthenia gravis, which I share with him. Considering that both of us are naturally bookish, and my own tendency to live in make-believe landscapes, we are unlikely

BEYOND THE HUNDRED ACRE WOOD

Review by Taral Wayne of
CHRISTOPHER ROBIN

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4575576/>

There is a timeless charm about the world inhabited by the fictional Christopher Robin. It is always spring, even on the most blustery days, and the heart never grows old when a silly old bear waits patiently for you ... no matter how *long* it takes to remember what you should never forget.

Among the final words in the books written by A.A. Milne, Christopher Robin speaks of the future:

“Pooh, promise you won't forget about me, ever. Not even when I'm a hundred.”

Pooh thought for a little.

“How old shall I be then?”

“Ninety-nine.”

Pooh nodded.

“I promise,” he said.

Still with his eyes on the world, Christopher Robin put out a hand and felt for Pooh's paw.

“Pooh,” said Christopher Robin earnestly, “if I — if I'm not quite — he stopped and tried again —

“Pooh, whatever happens, you will understand, won't you?”

“Understand what?”

“Oh, nothing.” He laughed and jumped to his feet.

“Come on!”

“Where?” said Pooh.

“Anywhere,” said Christopher Robin.

bedfellows.

What sort of film would the fictional Taral would make, I wonder?

NEBULA AWARD WINNERS

The Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America announced the winners of the 52nd Annual Nebula Awards, the Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation, the Andre Norton Award for Outstanding Young Adult Science Fiction or Fantasy Book, the Damon Knight Grand Master Award, the Solstice Award, and the Kevin O'Donnell Jr. Award for Service to SFWA on May 18, 2019 in Woodland Hills, California.

Novel

The Calculating Stars, Mary Robinette Kowal (Tor)

Novella

The Tea Master and the Detective, Alette de Bodard (Subterranean)

Novelette

The Only Harmless Great Thing, Brooke Bolander (Tor.com Publishing)

Short Story

"The Secret Lives of the Nine Negro Teeth of George Washington", Phenderson Djèlí Clark (Fireside 2/18)

Game Writing

Black Mirror: Bandersnatch, Charlie Brooker (House of Tomorrow & Netflix)

The Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation

Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse, Screenplay by: Phil Lord and Rodney Rothman

The Andre Norton Award for Outstanding Young Adult Science Fiction or Fantasy Book

Children of Blood and Bone, Tomi Adeyemi (Henry Holt; Macmillan)

OTHER AWARDS PRESENTED

The Kevin O'Donnell, Jr. Service to SFWA Award

Lee Martindale

The Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award

Neil Clarke

Nisi Shawl

Damon Knight Memorial Grandmaster Award

William Gibson

Given her attitude to cyberpunk, I wonder if Jo Walton's response to the Grandmaster Award was to step quietly out into the kitchen and bite her cat?

My ballot for the Hugo Award Best Short Story by Sue Burke

I have a problem. I really like four of the six short stories nominated for this year's Hugo Award and would be pleased if any of them won, and the remaining two are highly meritorious as well. If you get the chance, read these stories or any one of them chosen at random. It will be worth your time.

That said, here's my ballot. The Hugos uses a ranked voting system, so I have to rank them — but why can't there be a co-winners like the eight finalists in the 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee?

6. "**The Court Magician**," by Sarah Pinsker (Lightspeed, January 2018) My low rank is solely due to my disagreement over the story-telling style. A boy discovers the cost of magic, and he learns that good intentions do not overrule cold cause and effect. The fable-like telling to me felt too distant, which I thought obscured the originality of the story — that's a quibble, though, and the ideas within the story are well worth telling.

5. "**The Tale of the Three Beautiful Raptor Sisters, and the Prince Who Was Made of Meat**," by Brooke Bolander (Uncanny Magazine 23, July-August 2018) This is a tale of dragons, a witch who is a princess, and a stupid prince, and the story is praiseworthy despite my low rank. It upends some conventions and the plot never falters. For me, it tries too hard to be funny — but a sense of humor is so uniquely personal that other people may think it strikes just the right notes.

4. "**STET**," by Sarah Gailey (Fireside Magazine, October 2018) The story format is a draft of a research paper with comments written in the margins by editors and reactions by the author. A woman loses her daughter in an accident involving an automated car and, as revealed in the research paper she has written, she believes that the car made the wrong choice. The emotions are raw, and the unusual format is used for good ends. I rated it in fourth place only because I thought the story rested on some obvious ideas — but they're expressed with an authenticity that lingered with me.

3. "**The Secret Lives of the Nine Negro Teeth of George Washington**," by P. Djèlí Clark (Fireside Magazine, February 2018) This won the Nebula Award, a well-deserved recognition. The story takes a fact, which is that Washington had dentures made of human teeth,

and uses it to create nine short biographies of the slaves whose teeth were used, each with a unique story and a specific kind of magic. I wish the magic had changed the sweep of history somehow — but the story is satisfying without that.

2. "**A Witch's Guide to Escape: A Practical Compendium of Portal Fantasies**," by Alix E. Harrow (Apex Magazine, February 2018) This was my vote for the Nebula Award. A witch librarian wants to help a troubled boy find the book he needs to escape his life. I liked it so much that I read it slowly so I could enjoy it longer. In truth, this is a tie for my number-one choice.

1. "**The Rose MacGregor Drinking and Admiration Society**," by T. Kingfisher (Uncanny Magazine 25, November-December 2018) I laughed out loud when I read this. Some mythical, magical men meet their match with a strong-willed mortal woman. The story-telling is wonderfully paced with delightful characterization, and it deliberately and transparently turns traditional tales on their heads. Again, humor is uniquely personal, but, personally, I loved this story.

WORLDCON BIDS

- 2021
Washington, D.C.
<http://dcin2021.org/>
- 2022
Chicago
<https://chicagoworldconbid.org/>
- 2023
Chengdu
Nice, France
<http://worldconinfrance.org/en/NewOrleans>
- 2024
Glasgow
<http://www.ukin2024.org/>
- 2025
Seattle
Perth, Australia

NASFIC BIDS

- 2020
Columbus, Ohio

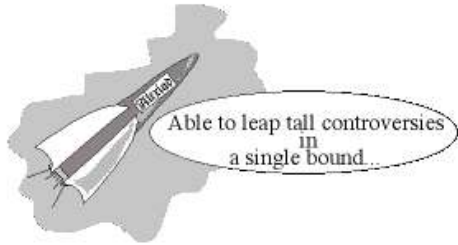
WORLDCON

- 2020
ConNZealand
Wellington, New Zealand
July 29-August 2, 2020
<http://ConNZealand.nz/>

NASFIC

- 2019
Layton, Utah
July 4-7, 2019
<https://www.spikecon.org/>

 Letters, we get letters



From: **Joy V. Smith** April 17, 2019
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 33810-0341 USA
Pagadan@aol.com
<http://www.joyvsmith.com/>

Thanks for all the news and book reviews (none of which I've read). And thanks for the Nebula and Hugo awards listings — and the reviews, Sue. (I don't think I've read any of them either.) Sorry about your health news, Joe. I hope you're at home and feeling better now...

I was only in the hospital for two days.

Thanks to Rodford Edmiston for the history of paper, linen, rags, and mummy wrappings. Interesting background on recordings also. (I still miss my collection.) And I miss Sue Burke's con reports, but moving, etc. takes a lot of time...

First I've heard of the Twitter squabbles. My Twitter feeds are apparently gentler and more constructive. On the home front, we finally got a puppy from Animal Control. Small short-coated dogs and puppies go fast at the SPCA and Animal Control, but keeping an eye on their websites gave us an opportunity because two puppies popped up last thing Saturday night before AC closed; they were closed Sunday, and we were there first thing Monday morning. However, another woman was there with her heart set on the Beagle cross for her daughter. The other puppy was a Chihuahua/terrier cross (theoretically), and we didn't want a dog that small, but a bigger pup would be better for a little girl so we let her have him and she was really grateful. Anyway. Don't pick up that puppy! You'll bond. Too late. So now we have a little guy who loves playing with Blizzard, who's getting a lot more exercise, and the cat has taught him respect by bopping him on the head periodically. We hope he'll get bigger — at least as big as the cat...

Oh, and I love your quote, Joe:

As Chekov said, "If in the first act you have hung a phaser on the wall, then in the following one it should be fired."

I'd love to post it on Facebook (lots of writers there) if you don't mind.

Somebody else said it, but go ahead.

— JTM

P.S. Our new puppy's name is Samwise Gamgee — mostly Samwise or Sammy.

Congratulations on the new puppy!

— LTM

May 16, 2019

In case you're interested, *Taboo Tech* is my latest book:

Taboo Tech is a science fiction adventure; it begins with Lacie Leigh Collier saying good-bye to her parents, who leave her in her Uncle Sterling's care. However, this family has secrets and is fascinated with discovering caches of ancient technology, most of which is forbidden and protected zealously by the Interstellar Guard. So when her uncle gets impatient — he's supposed to be taking care of Lacie until she comes of age — and takes her with him while on an venture of his own and is pursued by the IG, he sends Lacie on her way, and she must make her way back home, with her own AI, the young Embers, and continue her education at the space academy and points beyond while wondering where her parents are...

Available on Kindle and beyond:
<https://amzn.to/30eJcd9>

From: **Martha Berry** April 30, 2019
martha.berry@louisville.edu

A friend I met through CJ Cherryh fandom, is a writer for the Audio Drama market. I don't know if any of your readers would be interested or follow such things. I can't even tell you where to listen! I bought Amber Room Hunters on CD.

Anyway, this Go Fund Me tells some of the history.

https://www.gofundme.com/f/from-jim-french-productions-to-aural-vision-llc?fbclid=IwAR2gxGyIP-xB4agLqV0ioNMxBdL-al2Ne9b2u1804g3augS7BPi_qabTN9k

Sable Jak has won awards for writing at Moondance.

From: **Timothy Lane** May 6, 2019
timothylane51@gmail.com

I noticed the brief discussion of I. G. Farben in your Dick review (a phrase I couldn't use on Disqus, Dick being a forbidden word). Their breakup after World War II was accompanied by criminal trials for war crimes. The problem was that they didn't merely use slave labor, or even slave labor from concentration camps like

Nordhausen. They set up a synthetic rubber plant at the Polish city of Oswiecim, drawing labor from the labor (and extermination) camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau. That was a real no-no after 1945. They also supplied some of these camps with Zyklon-B, and quite likely knew why they used so much.

"Dick being a forbidden word." That must make comments about Nightwing (Richard John "Dick" Grayson) difficult to post.

Well, your fluid buildup can't have been too bad if they didn't give you lots of diuretics, as they did to me in January 2012. I lost 22.8 pounds of fluid in 48 hours — about 10 liters. Some time after my collapse on June 30, 2017, they finally stopped. But no one tried to get me to wear pressure socks until I had my calf ulcerations.

The listings for prospective Nebula and Hugo awards is interesting. It's no surprise that I haven't read or seen any of them, but even most of the writers are unfamiliar to me. At least the Best Related Work Hugo nominees involve familiar topics, though not familiar works. I was surprised that none of the fan nominees or even pro artists are familiar names. At least I did recognize some of the editors.

There has been a shift in the field, as the big publishers hire English-lit people as editors and they buy books that go with their flow. A "best fan writer" nominee is now more often than not a minor pro with a blog, or a paid writer about SF.

The Retro-Hugos are another matter. Lots of familiar names, even ones I've read. The Best Dramatic Presentation Long Form nominees sound like something from later times, and I was surprised to see *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* in the Short Form.



My top votes for those (if I had a vote) would probably be: *Conjure Wife* for Best Novel, "We Print the Truth" for Best Novella, "Mimsy Were the Borogoves" (I know "The Jabberwocky" by heart) for Best Novelette, and either "Q. U. R." or "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" for Best Short Story. I'd go with Campbell for Best Editor. I'm not familiar enough with SF/F art from that period, but did have a book of Virgil Finlay art.

I had read that there was possibly some interbreeding between the Neanderthals and Cro-Magnons, but it's a surprise to see that the DNA surveys can (theoretically) compute how much an individual has. I would imagine that Robert Kennedy's numbers are typical for Europeans. No doubt a lot of non-Europeans have some (obviously very distant) Neanderthal ancestry as well.

They also study Denisovan ancestry. I still wonder about that but now that a Denisovan bone has been found somewhere else than Tibet, not so much.

George W. Price's letter was interesting. I was required to get a slide rule for one of my high school classes, but somewhere along the line the slide rule got lost. I could still use it, but it got left behind on a move, probably when we went from a house to an apartment and had to leave a lot behind.

I had a Handbook of Mathematical Tables and Formulas which I got as a book award for my geometry class. It naturally included a set of logarithmic tables. Unfortunately, it was left behind like nearly all of our books when we abandoned our house (which has since been sold with all its contents for what we owed on it).



One of the many political books I had in our house was a study of Chicago politics by ward. I recall one alderman who resigned after the local FBI guy greeted the alderman having lunch with mob boss Sam Giancana. Oops. But it's nice to see that Chicago still keeps up its tradition of fraud, even if its fraudulent signature revocations rather than fraudulent votes. But submitting extra signatures is a norm everywhere, because some will always turn out to be invalid for legitimate

reasons.

I assume Lisa will have a lot to say about that unique ending to the Kentucky Derby. I hope she didn't have a bet on Maximum Security.



From: **Lloyd Penney** May 13, 2019
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Thank you for issue 104 of *Alexiad*. It's a quiet day here, with Yvonne out to tour our provincial museum with her sister, and I'm all coffee'd up, and a huge stack of zines to attack, so your zine is up next.

I did see that TAFF was won by Geri Sullivan. I did float a trial balloon to see if there was any interest from others in a TAFF run myself, but let's just say that I am truly no one's candidate. Even with the bank account that goes with the title of TAFF winner, there seems to be the expectation that you will still pay your own way to the Worldcon, with no guarantee that the convention will offer you any financial assistance once you are there. A fan fund is quite the job, and as we discovered when Yvonne and I ran for and won CUFF (Canadian Unity Fan Fund) some years ago, there are many who think you're ripping off the bank account, or you're not doing enough, or we must be up to something, even after a successful trip and printed trip report.

After Guy and Rosy Lillian won DUFF, I noticed that their fundraising efforts seemed to cost as much as the grant from the fund.

I am sure you have some comments on the results of the Kentucky Derby, and the disqualification of the first horse across the finish line due to interference. That made a little history...let's hope the Preakness will be less controversial.

I also have to keep my blood sugar in check, and my levels are close to the upper safe levels, but I have found for myself that as long as I don't eat anything too sugary before I go to bed,

my levels will be in the safe range when I take my own sugar levels in the morning. For my own measurements, as long as I don't have a reading of 7 or more, I am good.

I have had to look out for corn chips, which send my blood sugar booming. A restaurant here has free corn chips for people who get on their emailing list. It also has veggie burgers and diet vanilla creme soda, which Lisa likes. Why are the things that taste good bad for you?

Good to see the finalists for the Hugos and Nebulas, even if I do not have the vote in them. I recognize only a few names in both, and I will have to take some pleasure in that those awards are still being given out. Congrats to James Nicoll on his nomination, but no, I really have no idea who the others are.

My loc... we have a few conventions to go to this summer, and more small events we will be vendors at, so our plates are quite full. In about 16 days, Yvonne takes me to London for three weeks to do touristy stuff, and celebrate our 36th wedding anniversary, and my 60th birthday. We're gone on May 29, and will return reluctantly, I'll wager, on June 19. When we do return, Yvonne is returning to a former employer to take on a three-month assignment to build the savings up again, and I will be redesigning my resumes for yet another attempt to find some employment. The editorial job with the Christian employer is almost done, and has been a much-needed source of income.

To Sue Burke... I might have mentioned in my previous loc that I kept my previous flip-phone for so long, it outlasted the 3G network it was on. I was sent a new flipphone (yes, they do exist), but the software on it is once again unintuitive. Some very old habits must be broken in order to use it; it will take me a little while.

I had to get Grant a new flip-phone the other day.

— JTM

We are getting ready for a steampunk event in Ottawa, and will head up there this coming weekend. After we get that done, it's the final pack for our London expedition, and that might keep me off writing locs for a little while. I will be writing some on the way there and the way back, and will carry some rough printouts to read, but we will be having some good times in the steampunk and Wizarding World fashions, and will have some stories to tell and photos to illustrate them. Many thanks for this issue, and see you with the next.

From: **John Purcell** May 28, 2019
3744 Marielene Circle, College Station,
TX 77845
askance73@gmail.com

While I work on my second cup of coffee today, now is as good a time to compose a letter of commentary on the most recent *Alexiad* before the due date for the next issue, which happens to be this coming Saturday. I had best get cracking.

I disagree with you, Joe, about TAFF having "outlived its usefulness." My disagreement should not be a surprise since two years ago I was the recipient of this honor, and without it, I probably would still not have taken a trip to Europe that year or any year. While it is true that airfares for trans-Atlantic flight have dropped significantly and many fans are now well-off enough to travel overseas fairly often, such major trips are still out of the reach of many fans. TAFF and its sister funds definitely offer a lot to fandom, and they are practically wholly subsidized by fan donations, with some moneys coming from organizations like Fanac.org and SciFi, Inc., to help bolster the fan fund coffers.

Another of your TAFF-ish comments also deserves response. You said "Yet, from seeing fund-raising descriptions, it seems to cost as much to raise the money for the next candidate as to go." What a surprise that I disagree. Personally, I have spent my own hard-earned money to attend conventions that I was planning on attending to promote TAFF and raise fundage for it, and those efforts were well rewarded. From my perspective, it was not much of an effort at all, and fun, too. Andrew Hooper always raises enough through his eBay auction sales to make significant donations to fan funds, and the Fan Fund auctions at Corflu and Worldcons likewise do well. Plus, the voting donation is minimal — \$4 in North America, and either 3 Pounds Sterling or 3 Euros in the UK or Europe — and many of the fans who vote exceed the minimum. In fact, in this year's election cycle that ended with Geri Sullivan becoming the North American TAFF delegate to the Dublin Worldcon, the total North American voting donations cracked the \$1500 mark, resulting in an average donation per voter of \$11.47. That's not bad at all. A very impressive total, and I thank everyone who contributed to this success.

All of this reinforces my belief that TAFF and the other fan funds — DUFF, GUFF, NOFF, and CUFF — do indeed serve their intended purpose of fostering links between international fans, and that is a noble cause. Valerie and I met so many wonderful people on our trip two years ago. Despite some stressful travel situations that were mostly the result of our own international travel naiveté, everything went very well and we had a great trip that we still talk about. I highly recommend people get involved with the fan funds; they are definitely worth the effort.

As you can see, Lloyd Penney is less optimistic. I remember the scandals that hit TAFF in the nineties. They made it seem not to have much of a point.

— JTM

Now I have to finish my TAFF Trip Report. Almost done with it: two more sections to finish and then it will be time to splice, slice, and dice, then scotch tape the whole bugger together. I will get onto the Prague section again later today.

I am interested to see what Lisa has to say about the Kentucky Derby controversy. Never before has the winner of that horse race been disqualified. In reviewing the race, Maximum Security definitely bumped into and blocked another horse, allowing the second place finisher Country House to be declared the winner. The Belmont Stakes are coming up Real Soon Now, and there won't be a Triple Crown winner this year, but I enjoy watching these races. Horses are beautiful animals, and I do love riding them.

Well, there are other things I could comment upon — the Nebula Award winners (announced recently) and the Hugo nominees; Rod's "Joy of High Tech" article; the letter column — but nothing I want to say really strikes me as essential, even though I did enjoy reading everything in this issue, which always happens. Another splendid issue, Joe and Lisa, and I wish both of you well and good health.

Actually, Maximum Security is only the second Derby winner to be disqualified. The first was Dancer's Image back in 1968. He was disqualified for an illegal drug.

—LTM

From: **Robert S. Kennedy** May 29, 2019
5301 East Warm Springs Avenue, Apt. B306, Boise, ID 83716-6205 USA
robertk@cipcug.org

My thanks for Vol. 18 No. 2 (April 2019, Whole Number104).

Happy Birthday to me. My niece, Sheilah, teaches third grade. She had her students get on her phone and sing Happy Birthday to me. All during the day the staff here said Happy Birthday to me. Then after dinner the Dining Room staff sang Happy Birthday to me. My nephew David and his son Aaron came over in the evening. All that made for a good birthday.

I am truly sorry to hear about your continuing health problems. I wish you well, but it does not sound good. After my pacemaker was installed, and prior to another procedure, I too had the drug stress test. It turned out ok. If they had put me on the treadmill I would have had a heart attack.

Your comments about the antivaxxers were well made.

Ex-Dr. Andrew Wakefield has a lot to answer for.

The Joy of High Tech by Rodford Edmiston was very enjoyable as usual.



ON (NOT) POSTING AT TOR.COM by Taras Wolasky (a.k.a. Taras Wolansky ☺) was quite interesting and revealing. And it just increased my decision not to have anything to do with Facebook even though the subjects are not related.

Your listings of the finalists for the HUGO and RETRO-HUGO Awards reinforced my not getting involved because I did not recognize almost all of the nominees.

I certainly hope the next year's WORLDCON in New Zealand goes well.

George W. Price: Your comments about the Machine in Chicago politics were quite fascinating. Is the newly elected Mayor part of the Machine?

Al du Pisani: I have never commented on your letters before. I just want you to know that they are quite interesting, informative and very much enjoyed.

From May 4 to May 11 I was in Houston, Texas for the annual U. S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association Reunion. Among other activities there was a tour of NASA which was the main reason that I attended. All in all it was quite enjoyable until my attempt to return home. On Saturday the 11th my booked flight from Houston to Dallas was cancelled because of storms. I was finally able to get a flight to Dallas late in the afternoon. But the last flight from Dallas to Boise had left several hours earlier. So I spent the night in the Dallas airport and was joined by a woman and a 93 year old man. It was incredibly uncomfortable and we did not get any sleep. We did talk a lot. In the morning the woman left first, then the man. After 8:00 am I got to my flight and was off to Boise. I was met by my nephew-in-law Brad Cozzens. We then met up with my niece Sheilah and we had lunch. Finally I was back

to my residence. The lack of sleep caused me problems for several days. That was probably the result of my age.

From: **George W. Price** June 2, 2019
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price4418@comcast.net

April Alexiad:

In his review of Turtledove's *Through Darkest Europe* (which I have bought but not yet found time to read), Joe cites Andrew Bostom's *The Legacy of Islamic Antisemitism*. This triggers a terminological pet peeve of mine: the words "anti-Semitic" and "anti-Semitism."

What we really mean is "anti-Jewish" and "anti-Jewism." The despicable reality to which those words apply — the dislike and persecution of Jews — does not get any better by using "Semitic" as a smarmy euphemism. Or is it just supposed to sound more learned, like saying "anthropogenic" instead of "man-made"?

The terms are also absurdly inaccurate, since "Semitic" properly refers to several ethnic groups besides Jews. For obvious example, Arabs are by far the largest Semitic group in the modern world. Not all Arabs are Jew-haters, but enough are to give us millions of "anti-Semitic Semites." Now doesn't that sound silly? But I doubt if there is any realistic hope of changing such a well-established usage.

It was a "scientific" version, once religion ceased to matter so much. Nowadays the trendy term is "anti-Zionist". That doesn't change the hate but it does expand the hater's vocabulary.

Rodford Edmiston's "Joy of High Tech" column discusses how technology affects culture. He mentions that aluminum foil has largely replaced tin foil, but the older name still persists.



Another example of language lagging behind technological change is the persistence of horse-oriented phrases. We still say "hold your horses!" and "whoa!" We still give "free rein" to our passions, resulting in "unbridled" anger, and we get "saddled" with responsibility. You can think of many others. And of course, the vehicles that replaced horses are rated in "horsepower."

The process will doubtless continue: we now have car-oriented phrases which will persist even when obsolete. You can bet that if all cars become electric, we will still "step on the gas."

Robert S. Kennedy discourses on the wrongness of judging people of other eras by the standards of ours, especially in regard to slavery. Joe adds a note: "Considering that one of the causes of Amelie Zhao's being targeted was that she said that slavery existed in other places than the United States, I think a proper reminder is in order."

Indeed so. We can point this up by making two seemingly contradictory statements:

- (1) During the three centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, about ten million black Africans were shipped to the Americas.
- (2) However, during those same three centuries, no more than about 300,000 black Africans were captured and enslaved by white (European or American) slave raiders.

(I'm citing this from memory, so the numbers are not exact, but the orders of magnitude are right.)

Now then, is there any way these two statements can both be right?

Yes, of course. The apparent contradiction is resolved by noting that the great majority of slaves were captured by other Africans (not by whites), and then brought to the coast and sold to the white slave traders.

An African king or chieftain would win a war, and then sell his captives into slavery — which the captives usually preferred to having their heads cut off. And of course, sometimes the war was for the purpose of capturing slaves to sell. Supply and demand, you know.

In short, nearly all the Africans brought to the Americas were slaves before they ever saw a white man.

Sue Burke informs us that she has moved to Park Tower on Sheridan Road in Chicago.

I have some history with that building. But I never knew its name until now — I always thought of it as "the black tower." It's the tallest building for a mile or more in any direction. Instead of seeing the elevated trains across the alley from her back yard, Ms. Burke can look down at them from a couple of blocks away.

In the late 1980s I dated a woman who lived

there. By coincidence, her name was Sue. There was a dental clinic on the first floor of her building, so when I found I needed dental care, that's where I went. Well, the relationship with Sue didn't blossom, and soon petered out. A few years later the dentist moved to a new location and I followed him. So I haven't been in Park Tower for twentysome years.

Sue that I was briefly dating was the only person I have known who was fluent in four languages.

She was born on Taiwan (then called Formosa) in the early 1930s. Her family tongue was Fukienese, the language spoken in the adjacent province of mainland China. Taiwan had been under Japanese occupation since 1895, so her primary schooling was in Japanese.

When World War II ended in 1945, the Japanese moved out and the Nationalist Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek moved in, so her high-school education was in Mandarin. She started working at an American air base and learned English, which she spoke very well.

Despite all this linguistic accomplishment — which was mostly by force of circumstance, not choice — Sue had no interest in being an interpreter. She made her living doing general office work in English.

To return to Sue Burke, she does not seem too fond of social media, saying, "I'm convinced that the nature of social media both enables and encourages bullying because nothing in their architecture allows anyone or anything to control or prevent mob behavior."

I am inclined to agree, though I have no personal experience with social media. I have never felt any need to be on Facebook, and doubt that I ever will.

Still, I wonder what would happen if Facebook changed its business model so that instead of being free to users and supported by advertising, it charged users a subscription fee and had no advertising (and therefore collected no user data). I've heard that the fee would have to be about \$8 per month to bring Facebook the same profit it now makes. Would this have any effect on that mob behavior?

It would certainly cramp my family research work.

— JTM

From: **AL du Pisani** June 5, 2019
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So, we had our elections — Did not go as I expected, and I am still digesting all the opinions I heard about what the election meant.

It took me two hours twenty minutes to vote. Three minutes to do the voting, seven

minutes to walk back to my car, and the rest of the time I was queueing. This voting station have had the exact same problem for three elections now – and I do not think it is ever going to be addressed. And the problem is that there is exactly one person with an id reader verifying that the voters are legit. The voting halls are empty of all but the election personnel, and the one or two people that have managed to run the gauntlet and persevered through.

So what happened? For one, less people voted than in any previous election. My reading of this is that the entire electoral process is losing credibility, and less people are willing to maintain the electoral process than before. This is bad, because it will encourage processes other than elections to change and form governments. I also suspect that all the main political parties have too similar policies, and that there are not enough diversity of policies on offer. (While there is plethora of parties and of politicians with big egos.)

As to the results – The five major parties took all but 18 of the 400 seats available in parliament. The nine minor parties consists of one party with 4 seats, six with two each, and two with one each.

There were a further 34 parties (for 48 total) partaking in the election. Most of which did extremely badly. I do not know what most of the minor parties in parliament stand for, and have not heard much about the rest. Quite a lot of the minors tend to be one prominent politician parties. Some of them are splinters from the major parties, mostly the ANC, and most of them are heading for extinction. Almost none of them did any campaigning in any venue I was aware of.

So what happened to the big parties? The ANC lost voting share. But less than expected, so they are spinning it as a win and a mandate for Cyril Ramaphosa to carry on. They still ended up with more than 57% of the vote, or 230 seats, a loss of 19 seats.

The DA lost voting share for the first time ever, and there are as many reasons given for this as there are analysts commenting. (Just about the only reason not advanced have been that they have been treating their party reps in rural places badly – I heard a story about one party rep who could not get the pay she was owed, and started to rep for another party.) Whatever the reason, the bottom line is that their message is not resonating with either their existing voters, nor with prospective voters. Ending up with 20% of the vote, or 84 seats, a loss of 5 seats.

[Oh, by the way, the DA lost a lot of credibility with me due to their pre-election and election day's electronic communications, that were depicting something not approaching reality in any shape or form.]

The EFF essentially gained all the seats lost by the ANC, and so it looks as if radical Communism is going to get an outing is South Africa in the future. Ending up with 10% of the vote, or 44 seats, a gain of 19 seats.

The IFP gained in Natal, which was surprising, as most commentators seemed to have written them off, and they have not been very vocal. I suspect good organizational skills at root level paid off for them. Ending up with 3 % of the vote, or 14 seats, a gain of 4 seats.

The FF+ gained a little bit more than all the seats the DA lost. Now, the accusation against the FF+ is that it is the party of the radical right wing racist whites. So this result have been greeted with shock and horror. Result of 2% of the vote, or 10 seats, a gain of 6 seats.

My overall take of the results – South Africa is for all practical purposes a one party state, where the economic differences between the main political parties are very minor, as are their visions of the future. And the one aspect each of the parties seems to be ignoring as hard as they can, are the people voting with their feet.

Some of the reports on incidents here are even more disturbing. You may be one of those people soon.



My local SF club is celebrating 50 years of existence this year. We are planning some celebrations. But I do not know if we will make it to 60 years – We are not getting any young members. And the older members are getting to the age where death is not entirely unexpected.

I still look forward to meetings, and am good friends with a lot of the current regulars. But I am keeping a lot more of my opinions to myself, and can foresee a day where I may have to leave. (Mostly, because I am not seeing an indefinite future for myself in Johannesburg.)

I think this is because most of the people who read SF (or, these days, see it in movies or anime) and would be joining clubs are now in Internet groups without any personal contact with other enthusiasts.

The other society I have been attending in recent years is the Military History Society. Talks vary between “I was there” accounts by participants in wars, accounts of visits to museums, battle sites and other interesting places, accounts of interesting family members and their experiences, historians talking about some of what their digging in the archives have turned up, and others. Some evenings are very good, some indifferent, and rarely they can be boring.

So, recently there was the talk by an ex-private military contractor about his experiences in Iraq. He does not see any good future for the Middle East – Too many people with long lasting grudges against each other. But during his talk he illuminated an interesting aspect of the South African government's anti-mercenary law – It should be regarded as a preservation of dictators act. See, if a South African mercenary is essentially working as a security guard, the act have no effect. Only if the work results in the overthrow or attempted overthrow of a government, does it take effect.

Do you know how many SF novels this ruins? No more romantic, reliable, reasonably priced mercenaries.

— JTM

I am still looking on in wonder at what is currently going on in the spaceflight arena – I do not know if I would have believed all of what is going on to be possible, if you told me about it twenty or thirty years ago. And still, it is so much less than I hoped for as a small boy.

Every now and again I find a bit of treasure in independently published books. But most of them are not yet the kind of thing I can share with my friends. Pity. Hopefully that will change in the future.

From: **Sue Burke** June 6, 2019
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My mother had scarlet fever and everything else that a child could get in the 1930s. As a result, if there was a vaccine for something, we kids got it because her childhood had been scarred.

As a child in the 1950s and 60s, before many vaccines were available, I contracted measles and have never been so sick in my life. A boy at my school died. I also had chicken pox – and later shingles, a pox reprise characterized by shooting pain. My siblings got other illnesses, like whooping cough. My late friend Suzanne Allés Blom had polio, which paralyzed her legs for the rest of her life.

You do not need to explain shingles to me. I've had it. I was

luckier than most since I was spared the pain many have with it but it was no fun being confined to the house.

— LTM

Like my mother, all these unhappy memories turned me into a pro-vaxxer. But many people, especially younger parents, don't remember how awful the past could be. Those who can't remember the past and or learn from history are doomed to inflict it on their children.

Enough sermonizing ... almost. My husband found himself in the midst of a group of people comparing which conspiracy theories they believed in. Yes, they used the word *conspiracy theories*. His recounting sounded like people discussing their coin collections. "Yes, I do the anti-vaxxers, but I'm not in with one about the Rothschilds."

Like Joe and many of his relatives, I get at least one call daily that my telephone software helpfully labels "Scam Likely." Unfortunately, any sort of automated call seems to be labeled that, even calls from my insurance company, so I need to answer anyway, and I'm greeted by "Cameron from the accounting department" (which accounting department?) or Megan warning that "your social has been hacked" (social?) or advising me of a special offer to upgrade my homeowner's insurance, so please provide a little information to verify the policy (we don't own, we rent). Do I believe in a conspiracy theory if I think this is a criminal conspiracy?

You're lucky. I get notices that my social security number has been canceled. And nowadays I am barraged by callers selling Medigap insurance. I will have coverage.

Taras Wolansky asks why Spanish has changed less over time than English. There is a reason: the Real Academia Española (Spanish Royal Academy, www.rae.es). Founded in 1712 and modeled after the Académie française, its motto is "Limpiar, fijar, y da esplendor" (Clean, fix in place, and give splendor) to the Spanish language. The task to "fix in place" means, as the RAE solemnly explains, to maintain the unity of the language over space and time. The RAE is a conservative institution in the cleanest sense of the word, and its central task is to put the brakes on change. Fans and foes alike agree that it fulfills its task well.

On another subject, now that I live in a high-rise, I've observed that advertising is sometimes directed upward. For example, the roofs of Peapod trucks, a grocery delivery service, are painted with the slogan, "Do you need groceries up there?" I've also observed that the shadow of my building can be used as a sundial. In addition, my unit faces due west, and on the equinox, the setting sun shines

straight down the central hallway, so I could use my floorplan as a Stonehenge. (The city streets are also perfectly aligned east-west, so downtown skyscrapers make a splendid equinox Chicago-henge.)



Which comes from "Manhattan-henge", the days on which the sun rises or sets precisely along the alignment of Manhattan streets. The next one is July 12.

— JTM

Chicago has suffered a record wet and cold spring, but we've escaped the disasters befalling other parts of the Midwest and South. Meanwhile, I've met some deadlines and read a bit. With the editor's kind forbearance, a few reviews should appear in this issue.

From: **Taras Wolansky** June 9, 2019
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Thanks for *Alexiad* #104, April 2019.

Interesting to compare the Nebula, Hugo, and Retro-Hugo nominees. For one thing, unlike the Hugos, the Nebulas do not appear to have been taken over by a feminist/progressive clique — or, perhaps, not as thoroughly: male authors are underrepresented but not absent.

Every year that the Retro-Hugos are awarded, I wait with trepidation to see what the nominations look like. This year, it looks like we dodged the bullet again. At most, C.L. Moore and Leigh Brackett may be a little overrepresented.

But the regulars were working in Philadelphia, remember?

So far, my least favorite Hugo nominee (even setting aside its unbearably cutesy-poo language) is *Space Opera* by Catherynne M. Valente. In fact, it led me to toy with the idea of an article on "Science Fiction for Morons". But that's hyperbolic: it's really "science fiction for people who don't reason science-fictionally".

Picture this. A virtually omnipotent alien appears to every person on Earth simultaneously to announce that the human race is on trial, for the kinds of reasons you would hear in a cheesy sci-fi movie; and because these virtually omnipotent aliens claim to see the piddling, backward human race as a threat. If Earth comes in last in a contest with other rookie species, the human race will be exterminated.

Apparently not one of the seven billion humans who hear this spiel asks the alien, where does it come off preening its moral superiority and criticizing humanity, if it plans to exterminate an intelligent species? The last time humans did that was 35,000 years ago, and that was by accident!

But perhaps the moment of the most exquisite stupidity comes when a human lists some achievements of the human race. You didn't mention any women, says the alien.

What bad science fiction writing, to imagine that an alien being will mirror the concerns of early 21st-century feminists. When the universe is likely to present to us alien races with six sexes, or one sex three times the size of the other, or one sex intelligent and the other not, or one sex reduced to a vestigial organ permanently attached to the other, etc.



Review of Harry Turtledove's *Through Darkest America*: "Turtledove can comment on the horrors of Islam without being labeled an 'Islamophobe'". Looking at other reviews online, I got the impression some of them didn't get the book's satirical intent, instead interpreting it as saying, but for historical

accident, the position and character of Islam and Christendom could have been reversed. The kind of rationalization Jared Diamond deployed in *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

Review of John F. Carr's *Typewriter Killer: H. Beam Piper*: The story has always been, Piper committed suicide due to lack of funds. In 1988 I heard his friend, Jerry Pournelle, lament that he would have offered help, had he understood Piper was shooting pigeons not for sport but for food.

And yet, if the issue was lack of money, why didn't Piper simply sell off some of his gun collection? Does Carr say anything about this?

There are references to him selling guns from his collection to cover his living expenses. But there was only so much he could do in that line. Also, Piper didn't want charity.

Rodford Edmiston ("Cultural Holdovers"): Those tens of millions of useless mummy wrappings burned for fuel or heat were more valuable than people thought. Some of the recycled waste paper had lost classics of Greek and Roman literature written on it.

For example, the longest extant fragment of the great, 7th century B.C. poet, Archilocus, was found on a mummy wrapping. (About the same time Sappho was writing delicate love lyrics, he was writing about warfare and whoring.)



George W. Price: It's my own slide rule that I wish I still had (if it isn't hiding in all the boxes in my storage unit). My father was a doctor and never used one.

Lloyd Penney: "In this day, when we seem more willing to kill the people we don't like rather than do anything remotely con-

structive, the science fiction we love seems more fictional than ever." Not sure what you mean. Steven Pinker and others keep telling us violence in the world is in decline, and has been declining for generations. True, there is a faction (heresy?) in Islam that takes God's calls for religious war literally, but so far that has not been imitated by other religions.

Robert S. Kennedy: Some of this new attitude of "Wow! The Neanderthals were just like us!" is a product of progressive theology, based on the reluctance to recognize any variations within the human family.

Lloyd Daub: "Looking at what America did after 9-11, it is nonsensical that more isn't done to rid the planet of supervillains" in the world of superhero movies. The difference is, the terrorists had the ill judgment to be active outside of the United States, out of reach of the ACLU. If you read between the panels, when the Joker is sent back to Arkham Asylum for the thousandth time, the ACLU is lurking just out of sight. [;)]

As Mr. J. said, "The real joke is your stubborn, bone deep conviction that somehow, somewhere, *all of this makes sense!* That's what cracks me up each time!"

Sue Burke: In your account of Nebula Award-nominated short stories, I was puzzled by the reference to something you called "the not-a-slate 20BooksTo50K slate". I found an account of it here:

<https://thefederalist.com/2019/03/04/indie-sci-fi-authors-upending-traditional-publishing-turned-war/>

It claims to be an apolitical self-help group of indie writers trying to make a living, stay under the radar, and avoid the political regimentation that has unquestionably afflicted traditional publishing (especially YA, OMG). How do you see it? Is it the reason why the Nebulas at least appear to be less biased against male writers than the Hugos?

Speaking of the devil, you write, "Kosoko Jackson, one of the leaders of the charge against Amelie Wen Zhao's book, had his own young adult novel attacked on Twitter, and he had to withdraw it." Personally, I'm not trying very hard not to feel schadenfreude!

A writer for the *Guardian* did a survey of YA authors. From admittedly a small sample, he found that most had been threatened because of the content of their works, and two had even received death threats. And no, not from puppy types, but from other woke sorts.

— JTM

At Balticon, Gregory Benford was praising your book to the skies, telling everybody to read *Symbiosis*.

Maybe you should just throw in the towel and change the title ...

WAHF:

Martin Morse Wooster, with various items of interest.

Lloyd Daub, as much.

Patrick McCray, with thanks.

This Christmas Eve I shall turn 65.

As a result, I have been receiving calls from unidentified telephone numbers offering dead air. Occasionally, due to an error, I get connected and someone offers to sell me medical insurance. At least my abridged retirement package included that sort of insurance.

I suppose I am fortunate. Reading some of the odd news webpages turns up some very sad stories, like the woman who left a fortune to two very unpleasant fake televangelists.

In a more literary mode, there is the case of Harper Lee's second novel, *Go Set a Watchman* (2015), which casts some of the people from *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1966) in a very different light. Some people wondered if the book weren't an attempt by her conservator to make some more money out of the situation.

Not that this is anything new. There are speculations that L. Frank Baum didn't do much of the writing on *Glinda of Oz* (1920). He had died May 6, 1919, understand.

This sort of arrangement was big in the pulps. You'll recall Lester Dent asking for a raise, and being told, "Doc Savage is written by Kenneth Robeson", which was an indirect way of saying, "You can be replaced." And those numbered adventure series from the eighties, with numbers in the hundreds, were done under house names.

Now I see "Margaret Truman" and "Tom Clancy" novels, long after the originators have died. The methodology has infiltrated into the "mainstream", that is to say.

My aging is reflected in several ways. It seems my conditions reinforce each other. I am reminded of how fragile life can be.

Because my ileum is the part damaged by the Crohn's Disease, I have blood problems. Iron-poor blood (it can't be absorbed) and Geritol (they still make it) won't do any good. Which means every so often, when I get so utterly short of breath, I have to have an iron infusion, which is done like a blood transfusion, except that they don't have to match types. But it costs \$\$\$ after insurance (and \$\$\$\$\$ before it).

Reading *The Futurians* and *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* brings one to realize that the past is a different country. One could live on so very little then. Or die.

Will the people who spend \$\$\$\$ on their cosplay outfit of the Fifteenth Doctor who is also a Jedi Knight even comprehend this? The world is changing.

AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION VOTING

In the recent Australian election, votes were cast at the Australian Antarctic stations and the results were telephoned to Australia. Remember, in Australia, voting is mandatory for *everyone* . . .

Mawson plodded along, pulling his half-sledge. His stomach had long since quit rumbling with hunger; it had engulfed his entire body. He hoped the soles of his feet would stay on for the rest of the day. One eye was agonizingly snow-blind.

But he had to make it, he had to tell what had happened to Ninnis and poor Mertz. So he plodded along over the Antarctic ice, one well-wrapped foot in front of the other.

He looked up. There was a black speck there on the horizon! What was it . . . it was in front of him so he kept going, hoping, wishing.

It slowly resolved itself. A dog team, a rapid, fresh dog team! Had the *Aurora* brought more dogs? He dared not hope.

And then the team reached him. The driver was a strong young man, flushed and eager. He looked Mawson over. "Are you Douglas Mawson?"

His voice had not been used in ages, it felt like. He croaked, "Yes," or something approaching that.

"Australian Electoral Commission. I have brought your ballot. Please mark the ballot and seal it, then sign here to indicate that you have voted. Remember, voting is mandatory."

Trembling, Mawson made some marks on the paper, signed the other document, and said, as best he could, "Food."

The other man whipped up his dogs. "That would be a violation of vote-buying laws. G'day, mate." And he was off.

Stunned, Mawson stood there as the man sledged out of sight.

— Not from *Mawson's Will*

WHEN YOUR CARTOON ABOUT DRAWING YOUR OTHER CARTOONS IS ABOUT YOUR OTHER CARTOONS BEING ON SUMMER HIATUS, IT DOESN'T CONSTITUTE AN I-CANT-THINK-OF-A-GAG-TODAY GAG. SO HERE'S A PICTURE OF THE DOCTOR RIDING A UNICORN.



<http://arthurkingoftimeandspace.com/creativeprocess>

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Art: What we are mainly looking for is small fillos. Your fillo will probably be scanned in and may be reused, unless you object to its reuse.

Contributions: This is not a fictionzine. It is intended to be our fanzine, so be interesting.

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